Transporter
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Snowstorms help spotlight NJDOT's Central Dispatch Unit (CDU)

CDU – An acronym that could mean a medical ward in a local hospital or the name of a famous criminal investigation television series but in reality, this acronym stands for Central Dispatch Unit (CDU), NJDOT's 24/7 Communications Hub which is housed within Statewide Traffic Operations in Traffic Operations South. The Unit started prior to 1996 when a few of NJDOT's Security Guards, **George "Steve" Salas**, **Ricky White** and **Ernie Leverett**, fielded both maintenance and electrical emergency calls after hours in NJDOT's Gatehouse.

"I can remember looking up Maintenance Crews and telephone numbers on a huge map posted on the wall in the gatehouse with each route highlighted or marked with white out indicating which crew handled a specific area. Of course, things were much simpler then but now we are part of a state-of-the-art facility," said Steve Salas.

Graduating from the NJDOT gatehouse to a small room at The New Jersey State Police (NJSP) in West Trenton, the CDU is now housed at the NJSP Communications Center in Hamilton. This Unit, led by NJSP Senior Communications Officer, **Jose Garcia**, is comprised of 21 employees who work around-the-clock alongside the NJSP and the Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Operational Dispatch Units.

CDU serves as the single point of contact responsible for handling all emergency calls that come in from police departments around the state and dispatching the appropriate forces to handle these specific emergencies or problems. From a traffic light falling down and blocking an intersection, to a request for help by a Fire Department to a call about flooding on one of the state's highways, CDU tackles the problem. CDU Personnel handle a myriad of telephone calls and they have earned high marks for the work they perform day in and day out. Over the years, they have been asked to take on more challenges such as handling the Department's 1-800-POTHOLE Phone Line and Web Portal, and most recently, they provide assistance with oversized vehicle permits, which was formally handled in our Design Services Unit.

"It all starts with CDU! For NJDOT to get it right, our dispatchers have to not only handle a crazy work load of phone calls but get the emergency and non-emergency information right and pass it along to the appropriate response crew in a timely manner. These employees are really the unknown Heroes of the Department - working 24/7 during the entire year and being there during blizzards, floods, power outages, etc. You name it and they have been there for the DOT," said **Jim Hogan**, Executive Director, NJDOT Statewide Traffic Operations.

In an average month, CDU handles approximately 30,000 radio dispatch transmissions and telephone calls combined. This number could nearly double during the busy winter months with weather-related emergencies, such as the three winter snowstorms that New Jersey has

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NJDOT's Eddy Germain helps rebuild Haiti

Kudos to NJDOT's **Eddy Germain** of Design Services who recently traveled to Haiti to assist in earthquake relief efforts as part of the Multidisciplinary Center for Earthquake Engineering Research (MCEER) on behalf of the United Nations. His team was tasked with evaluating the structural integrity of 115 buildings and their occupancy recommendations in Port-Au-Prince.

Eddy holds a Masters of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the New Jersey Institute of Technology. He is a recipient of the 1976 Essex County College Mathematics Department Award and the 1978 American Concrete Institute Award from the New Jersey Institute of Technology. He teaches mathematics at Essex County College as an adjunct faculty member.

NJDOT Division of Design Services employee Eddy Germain was involved in the relief efforts in Haiti.

"I was not surprised by Eddy's willingness to go and help out in Haiti. Throughout Eddy's 30+ years at the Department he has always been willing to go the extra mile, to help a co-worker solve a design problem, to find a solution to a vexing construction problem, or to just do what needs to be done to get the job done!" said Richard Dunne, Executive Manager of Structural Engineering.

MCEER was originally established by the National Science Foundation at The State University of New York, Buffalo in 1986. MCEER is dedicated to the discovery and development of new knowledge, tools and technologies that equip communities to become more disaster resilient in the face of extreme events.

NJDOT Employee Memorial Committee announces 2nd Annual Scholarship Program

The Employee Memorial Committee (EMC) is announcing its second annual Educational Scholarship Program. This scholarship opportunity will help provide financial assistance to actively employed NJDOT parents and legal guardians whose children are pursuing a post-secondary education. Two one-thousand dollar ($1,000) scholarships will be offered again this year in honor of deceased members, Guy LoBue and Richard Hobson.

NJDOT Employee Memorial

Eligibility for scholarships is limited to children and/or step-children, who are currently high school seniors, whose parent(s) or legal guardians are active NJDOT employees. Applicants must use the scholarship awards to attend a post-secondary institution of learning that requires a high school diploma or Graduate Equivalent Degree (GED) for admission.

The scholarship is based on four criteria which include high school academic performance record, a 300 to 500 word essay, two written recommendations from teachers or school administrators, and a demonstration of volunteer service activities.

Applications packages will be available at the NJDOT headquarters in Ewing and the regional offices. The deadline for submission is Friday April 16, 2010.

Transporter

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NJDOT makes emergency repairs to Route 1/College Farm Road Bridge in North Brunswick

After an inspection at the ongoing construction of the Route 1/College Farm Road Bridge in North Brunswick, NJDOT discovered an eroding bridge pier that threatened a northbound traffic lane.

NJDOT expedited permanent repairs to the bridge pier to minimize impact to motorists, completing design and construction in about 48 hours. The bridge was closed to traffic as a safety precaution on Tuesday evening, January 19.

Route 1 / College Farm Road Bridge prior to repair

"NJDOT staff and contractors worked around the clock to return this vital bridge to service," said NJDOT Acting Commissioner Jim Simpson. "We know it was a terrible inconvenience for motorists, and we apologize for that, but safety is always our foremost concern."

The bridge pier was reinforced with stabilizing supports that will remain in place until the bridge and its twin that carries southbound traffic are replaced later this year.

The $24.1 million project replaces the structurally deficient bridge carrying Route 1 over an abandoned Conrail line and two local access roadways, North Meriel Drive and College Farm Road in North Brunswick. The bridge is being replaced with a wider structure, and the two current connector roads beneath the structure will be converted to a single roadway. NJDOT also will make safety improvements on Route 1 between Milltown Road and Ryders Lane in North Brunswick. The existing, unused railroad line will be removed, permitting the construction of a shorter, one span bridge and the realignment of the access roadways underneath. The project also features new traffic signals on the adjoining access roadways. Construction is scheduled for completion in June 2011.

Workers make emergency repairs to the Route 1 / College Farm Road Bridge.

Obituaries

Retiree **Geraldine Murphy** passed away January 22, 2010. She retired after 25 years as a Supervisor of Accident Records. She is survived by her sons, William, Barry and Leonard; her daughter, Susan; six grandchildren, Kellie, Michelle, Dana, Sloane, Abraham and Justin; and two great-grandchildren, Kendall and Sydney and many other family and friends.

Retiree **Yolanda "Cookie" Angelico DeMarco** passed away on January 28, 2010. She retired in 1982 after more than 20 years with the Department. She is survived by her husband Joseph; her son, Joseph; her daughter, JoAnn; her brothers, Frank and Umile; her sisters, Angelina and Katherine; her granddaughter, Dara and many other family and friends.

Retiree **Karl J. Brodtman Jr.** passed away on January 23. He retired in 2005 as a Project Engineer. He is survived by his wife Mary; his three sons, David, Michael and Karl Jr.; his daughter, Christine; his six grandchildren, Lauren, Rebecca, Leea, Olivia, Matthew and Michael; his sister Lynne and several nephews and nieces.

Retiree **John P. Supal** passed away on February 3, 2010. He retired after 35 years as a Bridge Repair and Maintenance Foreman. He is survived by his wife, Irene; his son, Daniel; his two daughters, Diane and Kathy; his six grandchildren, Paul, Steven, John, Jerome, Kathleen and Edward; his brother, Joseph; his sister Frances and several nephews and nieces.

NJDOT's Route 1 Millstone River Bridge project aims to protect bald eagles

NJDOT's replacement of the Route 1 Bridge over the Millstone River in West Windsor, Mercer County and Plainsboro, Middlesex County, is midway through construction. The project takes place in an environmentally sensitive area.

Bald Eagles perched in their nest.

"Environmental factors posed a real challenge to the design and construction of the project. Motorists might not realize it, but bald eagles nest along the heavily traveled Route 1 Corridor in Mercer County. To ensure the nesting eagles would not be adversely impacted during construction, NJDOT has set up a solar-powered webcam to keep a watchful eye on the eagles," said **John Campi**, Project Manager.

"We have been working on this webcam effort for about 2 years," said **Brendan Brock**, Environmental Project Coordinator. It's the result of a partnership with the Endangered and Nongame Species Program, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting our state's Endangered and Nongame Species Program. "We have been encouraged by the popular public response to the solar-powered Eagle Cam," said Brendan Brock.

"In addition to being our national symbol, the bald eagle is now a symbol of environmental stewardship as well," said Campi. "It has been a great conduit for place-based, wildlife education without disturbing habitat, which is a goal of the Department."

To view the bald eagles on camera, go to: http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/works/studies/rte1millstone/camera.shtm

The $18.8 million construction project will replace the original Route 1 Bridge that was constructed in 1928 and upgraded in 1960 with a new, concrete bridge that will feature shoulders and sidewalks. As part of the project, NJDOT will also repair and improve Route 1 between Harrison Street in West Windsor and Princeton-Plainsboro Road in Plainsboro. The project that began in March 2009 is expected to be completed by December 2010.

This web site project would not have been possible without the support of: John Campi, Division of Project Management; **Joseph Sweger** and Brendan Brock, Bureau of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Solutions; **Robert Holland,** Region Central Construction; **Debbi Hutton**, and **Cora Sue Santopietro**, Communications and Kathy Clark and Kim Korth, Endangered and Nongame Species Program, NJDEP.

NJDOT solar-powered webcam

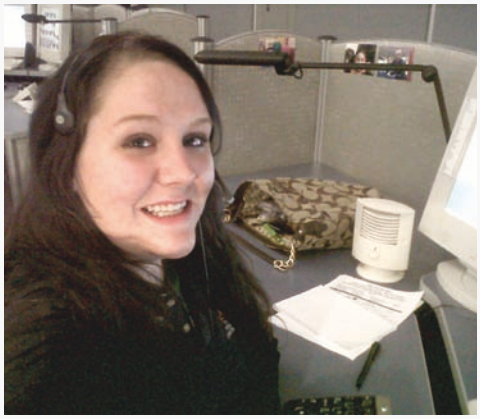
Snowstorms Continued from front page

experienced during the 2009/2010 winter season. In addition to dealing with emergencies, CDU also serves as the dispatching unit for NJDOT's Emergency Service Patrol (ESP) Drivers during ESP hours of operation.

CDU employees are passionate about their work and they are always ready to face new challenges. They receive praise often from their Traffic Operations and Maintenance colleagues as well as the many local police departments and the NJSP representatives that they come in contact with daily.

"We can never thank CDU enough for what they do. They represent the voice and ears of the Department. These fine employees work day and night in a very courteous and professional manner to satisfy their customers - the general public, police departments and operations employees," said Dhanesh Motiani, Director, NJDOT Division of Traffic Operations.

We surveyed a few of the CDU Staff and here is what they had to say:



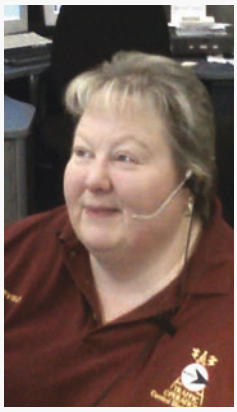
Fry

Sara Fry

"It really is the best feeling in the world knowing that you are part of the epicenter of communications between the police departments, the motorists and NJDOT every day. I really love coming to work and I enjoy every day that I spend here."

Nancy Campbell

"I have worked in the Emergency Services field for about 21 years. I feel that being with NJDOT is



Campbell

one of the most rewarding jobs that I have ever had. I am the first contact for help whether it's a civilian, an Emergency Service Patrol Driver, a local or state police representative or the fire department. I get to follow the call from beginning to end. I have direct contact with the emergency services involved and make sure that the information is properly reported to these responders in order for them to help the person in need. I feel as though I make a difference in the day-to-day functions of the people that I come in contact with. At the end of the day, I go home knowing that I have helped so many, whether it be calling ESP to help a senior citizen who needed her flat tire fixed, or calling one of our electricians to get a traffic light back in working order before the evening rush hour, or contacting one of our maintenance crews to assist with up-righting a tractor-trailer. For me, the most challenging times come with our winter snowstorms…you don't have time to think… you just have to go into action and use your best judgment. My job can be hectic but I would not trade it for any other job."

White

Ricky White

"First and foremost, I am blessed to have such a great job. I'm going on 27 years of service here at NJDOT, and for the majority of my career, I have worked in CDU. I have met a host of good and wonderful people over the years. In our line of work, we help people that live and travel in the state of New Jersey. We dispatch the ESP's and contract workers to get traffic signals fixed and pot holes repaired. When NJDOT closes after a regular business day, we are the first unit of contact and we start the ball rolling, no matter what the hour, to get emergencies handled. I really enjoy what I do and we are all about helping people which is so rewarding."

Salas

As Communications Operator **Steve Salas** mentioned earlier, CDU has come a long way since those early days of responding to emergencies in NJDOT's gatehouse. Recognized with a New Jersey State Customer Service Excellence Award several years ago, CDU Staff continues to go above and beyond to help their customers. The Department is proud to have them on the front lines as the first point of contact in an emergency…CDU is a dedicated team and they deliver.

CDU staff also includes: James Carbone, Maria Cunningham, Matthew DeVito, John Doherty, Jean Hennessey, Vincent Mattaliano, Raheem Mayes, Lisa Miller, Jonathan Nearhoof, Richard Ortiz, Antoinette Sapp, John Stillitano, Kenneth Warner, Harry Williams, Oliver "Ollie" Young and **Ray Young.**